Tafsir Ibn Kathir

ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لاَ رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

This is the Book; in it is guidance sure, without doubt, to those who fear Allah

Al-Fajr

Revealed in Makkah

Recitation of Surat Al-Fajr in the Prayer

An-Nasa'i recorded a narration from Jabir that Mu`adh prayed a prayer and a man came and joined him in the prayer. Mu`adh made the prayer long, so the man went and prayed (alone) at the side of the Masjid, and then left. When Mu`adh was informed of this he said,

"(He is) a hypocrite.''

He (Mu`adh) then informed the Messenger of Allah of what happened. The Prophet then asked the young man (about it) and he replied,

> "O Messenger of Allah! I came to pray with him, but he made the prayer too long for me. So I left him and prayed at the side of the Masjid. Then I went to feed my she-camel.''

The Messenger of Allah then said,

أَفَتَّانٌ يَا مُعَاذُ؟ أَيْنَ أَنْتَ مِنْ

Are you causing trouble Mu`adh Why don't you recite

سَبِّحِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الاٌّعْلَى

وَالشَّمْسِ وَضُحَـهَا

وَالْفَجْرِ

وَالَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغْشَى

`Glorify the Name of your Lord the Most High', (Surah: 87)

`By the sun and its brightness', (Surah: 91)

`By the dawn', (Surah: 89) and

`By the night as it envelops' (Surah: 92)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

وَالْفَجْرِ

89:1 By the dawn;

وَلَيالٍ عَشْرٍ

89:2 And by the ten nights,

وَالشَّفْعِ وَالْوَتْرِ

89:3 And by the even and the odd.

وَالَّيْلِ إِذَا يَسْرِ

89:4 And by the night when it departs.

هَلْ فِى ذَلِكَ قَسَمٌ لِّذِى حِجْرٍ

89:5 Is there (not) in them sufficient proofs for men of understanding!

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِعَادٍ

89:6 Saw you not how your Lord dealt with `Ad

إِرَمَ ذَاتِ الْعِمَادِ

89:7 Iram of the pillars,

الَّتِى لَمْ يُخْلَقْ مِثْلُهَا فِى الْبِلَـدِ

89:8 The like of which were not created in the land

وَثَمُودَ الَّذِينَ جَابُواْ الصَّخْرَ بِالْوَادِ

89:9 And Thamud, who hewed out rocks in the valley

وَفِرْعَوْنَ ذِى الاٌّوْتَادِ

89:10 And Fir`awn with Al-Awtad

الَّذِينَ طَغَوْاْ فِى الْبِلَـدِ

89:11 Who did transgress beyond bounds in the lands.

فَأَكْثَرُواْ فِيهَا الْفَسَادَ

89:12 And made therein much mischief.

فَصَبَّ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّكَ سَوْطَ عَذَابٍ

89:13 So, your Lord poured on them different kinds of severe torment.

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَبِالْمِرْصَادِ

89:14 Verily, your Lord is Ever Watchful.

The Explanation of Al-Fajr and what comes after it

Allah swears,

وَالْفَجْرِ (١)

وَلَيَالٍ عَشْرٍ (٢)

وَالشَّفْعِ وَالْوَتْرِ (٣)

By the dawn;

And by the ten nights,

And by the even and the odd.

Concerning **Al-Fajr**, it is well known that it is the morning.

This was said by Ali, Ibn Abbas, Ikrimah, Mujahid and As-Suddi.

It has been reported from Masruq and Muhammad bin Ka`b that **Al-Fajr** refers to the day of Sacrifice **(An-Nahr)** in particular, and it is the last of the ten nights.

The ten nights' refers to the (first) ten days of **Dhul-Hijjah**.

This was said by Ibn `Abbas, Ibn Zubayr, Mujahid and others among the Salaf and the latter generations.

It has been confirmed in Sahih Al-Bukhari from Ibn Abbas that the Prophet said,

مَا مِنْ أَيَّامٍ الْعَمَلُ الصَّالِحُ أَحَبُّ إِلَى اللهِ فِيهِنَّ مِنْ هذِهِ الْأَيَّام

There are no days in which righteous deeds are more beloved to Allah than these days.

meaning the ten days of **Dhul-Hijjah**.

They (the companions) said, "Not even fighting Jihad in the way of Allah''

He replied,

وَلَا الْجِهَادُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللهِ، إِلَّا رَجُلًا خَرَجَ بِنَفْسِهِ وَمَالِهِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْجِعْ مِنْ ذَلِكَ بِشَيْء

Not even Jihad in the way of Allah; except for a man who goes out (for Jihad) with his self and his wealth, and he does not return with any of that.

Explanation of Night

Concerning Allah's statement,

وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَسْرِ ﴿٤﴾

And by the night when it departs.

Al-`Awfi reported from Ibn `Abbas that he said,

"When it goes away.'' `

Abdullah bin Zubayr said,

"As some parts of it remove other parts of it.''

Mujahid, Abu Al-`Aliyah, Qatadah, and Malik who reported it from Zayd bin Aslam and Ibn Zayd, they all said;

"When it moves along.''

Concerning Allah's statement,

هَلْ فِي ذَلِكَ قَسَمٌ لِّذِي حِجْرٍ (٥)

There is indeed in them sufficient proofs for men with **Hijr**!

meaning, for he who possesses intellect, sound reasoning, understanding and religious discernment.

The intellect has only been called **Hijr** because it prevents the person from doing that which is not befitting of him of actions and statement.

From this we see the meaning of **Hijr Al-Bayt** because it prevents the person performing **Tawaf** from clinging the wall facing Ash-Sham. Also the term **Hijr Al-Yamamah** (the cage of the pigeon) is derived from this meaning (i.e., prevention).

It is said, "**Hajara Al-Hakim** so-and-so (The judge passed a judgement preventing so-and-so),'' when his judgement prevents the person from his liberty (i.e., of freely utilizing his wealth).

Allah says,

وَيَقُولُونَ حِجْراً مَّحْجُوراً

And they will say: **"Hijr Mahjur.''** (25:22)

All of these examples are different cases but their meanings are quite similar.

The oath that is referred to here is about the times of worship and the acts of worship themselves, such as **Hajj**, **Salah** and other acts of worship that Allah's pious, obedient, servants who fear Him and are humble before Him, seeking His Noble Face, perform in order to draw nearer to Him.

Mentioning the Destruction of `Ad

After mentioning these people, and their worship and obedience, Allah says,

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِعَادٍ (٦)

Saw you not how your Lord dealt with **`Ad**?

These were people who were rebellious, disobedient, arrogant, outside of His obedience, deniers of His Messengers and rejectors of His Scriptures. Thus, Allah mentions how He destroyed them, annihilated them and made them legends to be spoken of and an exemplary lesson of warning.

He says,

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِعَادٍ

إِرَمَ ذَاتِ الْعِمَادِ (٧)

Saw you not how your Lord dealt with `**Ad Iram** of the pillars,

These were the first people of **`Ad**. They were the descendants of **`Ad bin Iram bin `Aws bin Sam bin Nuh**. This was said by Ibn Ishaq.

They are those to whom Allah sent His Messenger **Hud**. However, they rejected and opposed him. Therefore, Allah saved him and those who believed with him from among them, and He destroyed others with a furious, violent wind.

سَخَّرَهَا عَلَيْهِمْ سَبْعَ لَيَالٍ وَثَمَـنِيَةَ أَيَّامٍ حُسُوماً فَتَرَى الْقَوْمَ فِيهَا صَرْعَى كَأَنَّهُمْ أَعْجَازُ نَخْلٍ خَاوِيَةٍ

فَهَلْ تَرَى لَهُم مِّن بَاقِيَةٍ

Which Allah imposed on them for seven nights and eight days in succession, so that you could see men lying overthrown, as if they were hollow trunks of date palms!

Do you see any remnants of them? (69: 7-8)

Allah mentioned their story in the Qur'an in more than one place, so that the believers may learn a lesson from their demise.

Allah then says, إِرَمَ ذَاتِ الْعِمَادِ (**Iram** of the pillars).

This is an additional explanation that adds clarification who they actually were.

Concerning His saying, ذَاتِ الْعِمَادِ (of the pillars.)

is because they used to live in trellised houses that were raised with firm pillars. They were the strongest people of their time in their physical stature, and they were the mightiest people in power. Thus, **Hud** reminded them of this blessing, and he directed them to use this power in the obedience of their Lord Who had created them.

He said,

وَاذكُرُواْ إِذْ جَعَلَكُمْ خُلَفَآءَ مِن بَعْدِ قَوْمِ نُوحٍ وَزَادَكُمْ فِى الْخَلْقِ بَسْطَةً فَاذْكُرُواْ ءَالاَءَ اللَّهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

And remember that He made you successors after the people of **Nuh** and increased you amply in stature. So remember the graces from Allah so that you may be successful.(7:69)

Allah also said,

فَأَمَّا عَادٌ فَاسْتَكْبَرُواْ فِى الاٌّرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَقَالُواْ مَنْ أَشَدُّ مِنَّا قُوَّةً أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْاْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ الَّذِى خَلَقَهُمْ هُوَ أَشَدُّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً

As for **'Ad**, they were arrogant in the land without right, and they said: "Who is mightier than us in strength''

See they not that Allah Who created them was mightier in strength than them. (41:15)

And Allah says here,

الَّتِي لَمْ يُخْلَقْ مِثْلُهَا فِي الْبِلَادِ (٨)

The like of which were not created in the land,

meaning, there had been none created like them in their land, due to their strength, power and their great physical stature.

Mujahid said,

"**Iram** was an ancient nation who were the first people of **`Ad**.''

Qatadah bin Di`amah and As-Suddi both said,

"Verily, Iram refers to the House of the kingdom of **`Ad**.''

This latter statement is good and strong.

Concerning Allah's statement,

الَّتِى لَمْ يُخْلَقْ مِثْلُهَا فِى الْبِلَـدِ

The like of which were not created in the land,

Ibn Zayd considered the pronoun of discussion here to refer to the pillars, due to their loftiness. He said,

"They built pillars among the hills, the likes of which had not been constructed in their land before.''

However, Qatadah and Ibn Jarir considered the pronoun of discussion to refer to the tribe (of **`Ad**), meaning

that there was no tribe that had been created like this tribe in the land - meaning during their time.

And this latter view is the correct position.

The saying of Ibn Zayd and those who follow his view is a weak one, because if He intended that, He would have said

"The like of which were not produced in the land.''

But He said:

لَمْ يُخْلَقْ مِثْلُهَا فِى الْبِلَـدِ

The like of which were not created in the land.

Then Allah says,

وَثَمُودَ الَّذِينَ جَابُوا الصَّخْرَ بِالْوَادِ (٩)

And **Thamud**, who hewed **(Jabu)** rocks in the valley, meaning, they cut the rocks in the valley.

Ibn Abbas said,

"They carved them and they hewed them.''

This was also said by Mujahid, Qatadah, Ad-Dahhak and Ibn Zayd.

From this terminology it is said (in the Arabic language),

- "the hewing of leopard skin'' when it is torn, and
- "The hewing of a garment'' when it is opened.

The word **`Jayb'** (pocket or opening in a garment) also comes from **Jabu**.

Allah says,

وَتَنْحِتُونَ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتاً فَـرِهِينَ

And you hew in the mountains, houses with great skill. (26:149)

A Mention of Fir`awn

Allah then says,

وَفِرْعَوْنَ ذِي الْأَوْتَادِ (١٠)

And **Fir`awn** with **Al-Awtad**,

Al-`Awfi reported from Ibn `Abbas that he said,

"**Al-Awtad** are the armies who enforced his commands for him.''

It has also been said that **Fir`awn** used to nail their hands and their feet into pegs **(Awtad)** of iron that he would hang them from.

A similar statement was made by Mujahid when he said,

"He used to nail the people (up) on pegs.''

Sa`id bin Jubayr, Al-Hasan and As-Suddi all said the same thing.

Allah said,

الَّذِينَ طَغَوْا فِي الْبِلَادِ (١١)

فَأَكْثَرُوا فِيهَا الْفَسَادَ (١٢)

Who did transgress beyond bounds in the lands. And made therein much mischief.

meaning, they rebelled, were arrogant, and went about making corruption in the land, and harming the people.

فَصَبَّ عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّكَ سَوْطَ عَذَابٍ (١٣)

So, your Lord poured on them different kinds of severe torment.

meaning, He sent down a torment upon them from the sky and caused them to be overcome by a punishment that could not be repelled from the people who were criminals.

The Lord is Ever Watchful

Concerning Allah's statement,

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَبِالْمِرْصَادِ (١٤)

Verily, your Lord is Ever Watchful.

Ibn Abbas said, "He hears and He sees.''

This means that He watches over His creation in that which they do, and He will reward them in this life and in the Hereafter based upon what each of them strove for. He will bring all of the creation before Him and He will judge them with justice. He will requite each of them

with that which he deserves, for He is far removed from injustice and tyranny.

فَأَمَّا الإِنسَـنُ إِذَا مَا ابْتَلـهُ رَبُّهُ فَأَكْرَمَهُ وَنَعَّمَهُ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّى أَكْرَمَنِ

89:15 As for man, when his Lord tries him by giving him honor and bounties, then he says:

"My Lord has honored me.''

وَأَمَّآ إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَـهُ فَقَدَرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقَهُ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّى أَهَانَنِ

89:16 But when He tries him by straitening his means of life, he says:

"My Lord has humiliated me!''

كَلاَّ بَل لاَّ تُكْرِمُونَ الْيَتِيمَ

89:17 But no! But you treat not the orphans with kindness and generosity!

وَلاَ تَحَاضُّونَ عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمِسْكِينِ

89:18 And urge not one another on the feeding of the Miskin!

وَتَأْكُلُونَ التُّرَاثَ أَكْلاً لَّمّاً

89:19 And you devour the Turath -- devouring with greed.

وَتُحِبُّونَ الْمَالَ حُبّاً جَمّاً

89:20 And you love wealth with love Jamma.)

Wealth and Poverty are both a Test and Honor or Disgrace for the Servant

فَأَمَّا الْإِنسَانُ إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ رَبُّهُ فَأَكْرَمَهُ وَنَعَّمَهُ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَكْرَمَنِ (١٥)
وَأَمَّا إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ فَقَدَرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقَهُ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَهَانَنِ (١٦)

As for man, when his Lord tries him by giving him honor and bounties, then he says:

"My Lord has honored me.''

But when He tries him by straitening his means of life, he says:

"My Lord has humiliated me!''

Allah refutes man in his belief that if Allah gives Him abundant provisions to test him with it, it is out of His honor for him. But this is not the case, rather it is a trial and a test, as Allah says,

أَيَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّمَا نُمِدُّهُمْ بِهِ مِن مَّالٍ وَبَنِينَ
نُسَارِعُ لَهُمْ فِى الْخَيْرَتِ بَل لاَّ يَشْعُرُونَ

Do they think that in wealth and children with which We enlarge them. We hasten unto them with good things. Nay, but they perceive not. (23:55-56)

Likewise, from another angle, if Allah tests him and tries him by curtailing his sustenance, he believes that is because Allah is humiliating him.

As Allah says,

كَلَّا ...

But no!

meaning, the matter is not as he claims, neither in this nor in that. For indeed Allah gives wealth to those whom He loves as well as those whom He does not love. Likewise, He withholds sustenance from those whom He loves and those whom He does not love. The point is that Allah should be obeyed in either circumstance. If one is wealthy, he should

thank Allah for that, and if he is poor, he should exercise patience.

From the Evil that the Servant does regarding Wealth

Allah said,

.. بَل لَّا تُكْرِمُونَ الْيَتِيمَ (١٧)

But you treat not the orphans with kindness and generosity!

This contains the command to honor him (the orphan).

Abu Dawud recorded from Sahl bin Sa\`id that the Messenger of Allah said,

أَنَا وَكَافِلُ الْيَتِيمِ كَهَاتَيْنِ فِي الْجَنَّة

The guardian of the orphan and I will be like these two in Paradise.

And he put his two fingers together - the middle finger and the index finger.

وَلَا تَحَاضُّونَ عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمِسْكِينِ (١٨)

And urge not one another on the feeding of the **Miskin**!

meaning, they do not command that the poor and the needy be treated with kindness, nor do they encourage each other to do so.

وَتَأْكُلُونَ التُّرَاثَ ...

And you devour the **Turath**,

meaning, the inheritance.

... أَكْلًا لَّمًّا (١٩)

devouring with greed.

meaning, however they can get it, whether lawful or forbidden.

وَتُحِبُّونَ الْمَالَ حُبًّا جَمًّا (٢٠)

And you love wealth with love **Jamma**.

meaning, in abundance.

This increases some of them in their wickedness.

كَلاَّ إِذَا دُكَّتِ الاٌّرْضُ دَكّاً دَكّاً

89:21 Nay! When the earth is flatened, Dakkan Dakka.

وَجَآءَ رَبُّكَ وَالْمَلَكُ صَفّاً صَفّاً

89:22 And your Lord comes with the angels in rows.

وَجِىءَ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِجَهَنَّمَ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَتَذَكَّرُ الإِنسَـنُ وَأَنَّى لَهُ الذِّكْرَى

89:23 And Hell will be brought near that Day. On that Day will man remember, but how will that remembrance avail him.

يَقُولُ يلَيْتَنِى قَدَّمْتُ لِحَيَاتِى

89:24 He will say: "Alas! Would that I had sent forth for my life!''

فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لاَّ يُعَذِّبُ عَذَابَهُ أَحَدٌ

89:25 So on that Day none will punish as He will punish.

وَلاَ يُوثِقُ وَثَاقَهُ أَحَدٌ

89:26 And none will bind as He will bind.

يأَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ

89:27 "O tranquil soul!''

ارْجِعِى إِلَى رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً

89:28 "Come back to your Lord, -- well-pleased and well-pleasing!''

فَادْخُلِى فِى عِبَادِى

89:29 "Enter then among My servants,''

وَادْخُلِى جَنَّتِى

89:30 "And enter My Paradise!''

On the Day of Judgement Everyone will be recompensed according to what He did of Good or Evil

Allah informs of what will happen on the Day of Judgement of the great horrors. He says,

كَلَّا ...

Nay!

meaning, truly.

...إِذَا دُكَّتِ الْأَرْضُ دَكًّا دَكًّا ﴿٢١﴾

When the earth is flatened, **Dakkan Dakka**.

meaning, the earth and the mountains will be flattened, leveled and made even, and the creatures will rise from their graves for their Lord.

وَجَاء رَبُّكَ ...﴿٢٢﴾

And your Lord comes,

meaning, for the session of Judgement between His creatures.

This is after they requested the best of the Sons of Adam -- Muhammad -- to intercede with Allah. This will occur only after they have requested the other great Messengers, one after another. Yet, all of them will say,

"I cannot do that for you.''

This will continue until the beseeching of the men reaches Muhammad, and he will say,

"I will do it, I will do it.''

So he will go and seek to intercede with Allah as the session of Judgement will have come, and Allah will allow him to intercede for that (the Judgement). This will be the first of the intercessions, and it is the praiseworthy station that has already been discussed in Surah Subhan (Al-Isra'). So Allah will come for the session of Judgement as He wills, and the angels will also come, lined up in rows upon rows before Him.

Then Allah says,

وَجِيءَ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِجَهَنَّمَ ...

And Hell will be brought near that Day.

In his Sahih, Imam Muslim bin Al-Hajjaj recorded that Abdullah bin Mas`ud said that the Messenger of Allah said,

يُؤْتَى بِجَهَنَّمَ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَهَا سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ زِمَامٍ مَعَ كُلِّ زِمَامٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ مَلَكٍ يَجُرُّونَهَا

Hell will be brought on near that Day and it will have seventy thousand leashes, and each leash will have seventy thousand angels pulling it.

At-Tirmidhi also recorded the same narration.

Allah said:

... يَوْمَئِذٍ يَتَذَكَّرُ الْإِنسَانُ ...

On that Day will man remember,

meaning, his deeds, and what he did before in his past and recent times.

...وَأَنَّى لَهُ الذِّكْرَى (٢٣)

but how will that remembrance avail him,

meaning, how can remembrance then benefit him

يَقُولُ يَا لَيْتَنِي قَدَّمْتُ لِحَيَاتِي (٢٤)

He will say: "Alas! Would that I had sent forth for my life!''

meaning, if he was a disobedient person, he will be sorry for the acts of disobedience he committed. If he was an obedient person, he will wish that he performed more acts of obedience.

This is similar to what Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal recorded from Muhammad bin Abi `Amirah, who was one of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah . He said,

> "If a servant fell down on his face (in prostration) from the day that he was born until the day he died as an old man, in obedience to Allah, he would scorn this act on the Day of Judgement. He would wish to be returned to this life so that he could earn more reward and compensation.''

Allah then says,

فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لَّا يُعَذِّبُ عَذَابَهُ أَحَدٌ (٢٥)

So on that Day none will punish as He will punish.

meaning, there is no one more severely punished than those whom Allah punishes for disobeying Him.

وَلَا يُوثِقُ وَثَاقَهُ أَحَدٌ (٢٦)

And none will bind as He will bind.

meaning, there is no one who is more severely punished and bound than those the **Az-Zabaniyah** punish the disbelievers in their Lord.

This is for the criminals and the wrongdoers among the creatures.

In reference to the pure and tranquil soul -- which is always at rest and abiding by the truth it will be said to it,

يَا أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ (٢٧)

ارْجِعِي إِلَى رَبِّكِ ...

O tranquil soul! Come back to your Lord.

meaning, to His company, His reward and what He has prepared for His servants in His Paradise.

... رَاضِيَةً .. well-pleased, meaning, within itself.

... مَّرْضِيَّةً (٢٨)

well-pleasing.

> meaning, pleased with Allah, and He will be pleased with it and gratify it.

فَادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي (٢٩)

Enter then among My servants,

meaning, among their ranks.

وَادْخُلِي جَنَّتِي (٣٠)

And enter My Paradise!

> This will be said to it at the time of death and on the Day of Judgement. This is like the angels giving glad tiding to the believer at his time of death and when he rises from his grave. Likewise is this statement here.

Ibn Abi Hatim recorded from Ibn `Abbas concerning Allah's statement,

يأَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ

ارْجِعِى إِلَى رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً

> O tranquil soul! Come back to your Lord, well-pleased and well-pleasing!

He said, "This Ayah was revealed while Abu Bakr was sitting (with the Prophet). So he said,

> `O Messenger of Allah! There is nothing better than this!'

The Prophet then replied,

أَمَا إِنَّهُ سَيُقَالُ لَكَ هَذَا

> This will indeed be said to you.